

April 28, 2004

## Urban Design and Public Art

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
Director of Planning	Community wide	Add text and map on Capitol View Corridors and text on Urban Design, public art and Urban Design Committee
<b>Recommendation:</b> Approval.		

### Description

The Lincoln/Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan has traditionally articulated goals for enhancing and preserving the distinctive character of our community, including strategies in historic preservation, protection of the Capitol environs and vistas, and urban design. The current Comprehensive Plan should be strengthened in these areas by emphasizing the benefits available through public arts programs, community design review, and protection of crucial Capitol vistas.

The proposed text addresses these topics as well as proposing restoration to the Plan of the Capitol View Corridors maps, included in the 1994 plan but omitted in the interest of brevity from the current Plan. Since Chapter 27.56 of Lincoln Municipal Code ("Capitol Environs District") provides certain protection for Capitol environs and views, the Plan should establish the community vision which the code implements.

Other portions of this proposal encourage all units of local government to avail themselves of the free advice offered by the City's Urban Design Committee, and urges that public art considerations be included at the earliest (and most economical) point in public design projects.

### Comprehensive Plan Implications

The proposed additional text and map strengthen the existing sections and language of the Plan, which state:

#### *"Quality of Life Assets*

*Preservation and enhancement of the many quality of life assets within the community continues. For a true "good quality of life," a community has more than jobs, shelter, utilities and roads - there are numerous service, education, historic and cultural resources which are fundamental to enriching lives. (Page F 15)*

*Preserve and enhance entryway corridors into Lincoln and Capitol View Corridors. (F 19)*

*General Principles for All Commercial and Industrial Uses*

– shall be located ... so that they enhance entryways or public way corridors, when developing adjacent to these corridors.” (F 38)

Conclusion

Lincoln and Lancaster County have a competitive edge to the degree that they maintain and enhance their reputation as an attractive, clean, well-planned place. Both private and public efforts are important in this arena but public example and leadership are essential. Furthermore, requiring design review of private projects, without setting a high standard in public construction, is unproductive and creates ill-will.

Recommendation

Strengthen urban design principles in Comprehensive Plan by adding the following language:

Amend the Comprehensive Plan as follows:

1. Add to “Future Conditions: Community Form,” after all the “Guiding Principles for the Urban Environment” as a new section on page F19:

“Urban Design and Public Art

The American cities generally regarded as especially attractive, such as Charleston, Boston, San Francisco, Savannah, and New Orleans, are older communities with a strong sense of cohesiveness and space. These cities had the advantage that distinctive parts of their fabrics were constructed in previous eras where there were fewer building materials and techniques available, and stronger architectural traditions. In Lincoln, Haymarket and several older neighborhoods demonstrate similar cohesiveness. Today, technology offers much more variety in building materials and techniques. Many contemporary buildings are thought of as “products” that have a more limited economic life. The automobile has generated huge new space and functional demands. All of these factors make it more difficult for communities today to develop and redevelop in an attractive, cohesive manner.

Most cities, including Lincoln, protect their cultural/architectural heritage through formal historic preservation efforts. Lincoln has taken further steps to protect and promote a positive physical character through special design requirements that protect the environs and views of the State Capitol Building—our community’s signature urban design asset--and that encourage compatible infill in its older neighborhoods. The Capitol Environs Commission is unique in that its membership includes city and state appointees, and its authority extends to all public and private projects within its district, including State projects. Its authority to identify and project important public vistas to the Capitol should be strengthened.”

2. Insert after page F 19 the Capitol View Corridors maps for the City and County as shown on the exhibits at the end of report.

3. Add to “Future Conditions: Community Facilities”, on page F 129, a new preface as follows:

“Urban Design

City government uses the volunteer advisory services of an Urban Design Committee (UDC). This is a group of design professionals and interested citizens appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the City Council. The Committee is charged with advising the Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission, city boards, and city departments on the design of city buildings and other public projects, major public/private developments, and any private projects constructed on city right of way or other city property. The Committee’s intent is to make sure that new public facilities are exemplary – that they provide functional and aesthetically pleasing facilities for the public, and model good design for the private sector. The Commission also works to publicize and reward good design, private as well as public, through an annual awards program.

The benefits of this free advice would be strengthened by including all public projects under UDC review, just as the Environs Commission reviews projects of all local and state governmental units. LES has brought projects to UDC, and Lincoln Public Schools has used the committee’s input on siting communication towers. But the Public Building Commission, which provides facilities for City and County government, does not currently benefit by UDC review, although it is the major developer of local government buildings. Lancaster County, the Railroad Safety Transportation District, the Airport Authority, and other units of local government could all utilize this experienced volunteer board.

Public Art:

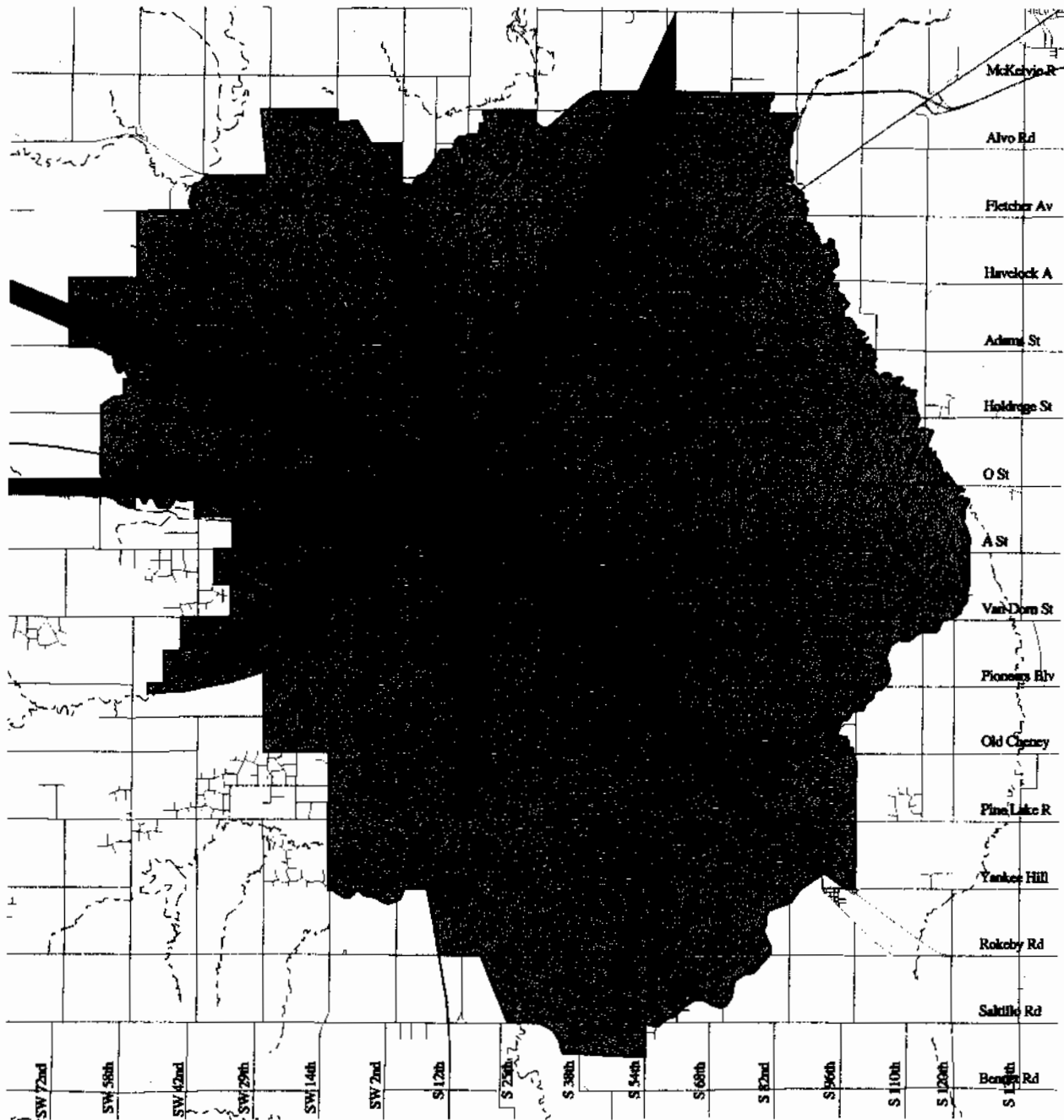
Cities also can strengthen their sense of place and positive image through promotion of artworks in public places. The Lincoln Arts Council demonstrated the power of public art through its invigorating “Tour de Lincoln” project and is promoting a downtown “art corridor” on 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The Arts Council may expand its activities in the future to assist with public art plans for downtown, Antelope Valley, and the city’s key entryways.

Lincoln also would improve the design of its public buildings and facilities, and expand its inventory of public artworks, by an early integration of the efforts of artists with architects and engineers on future projects. Cities like Seattle and Phoenix are more interesting places, with a stronger sense of local pride and identity, as a result of their efforts to integrate art in the design of many public construction projects. Most public facilities in Lincoln have been designed without opportunities for artistic expression, or with art added only as an afterthought. Local government should include artists on the design teams for major construction projects from the conceptual stage, and budget to incorporate artistic expression.”

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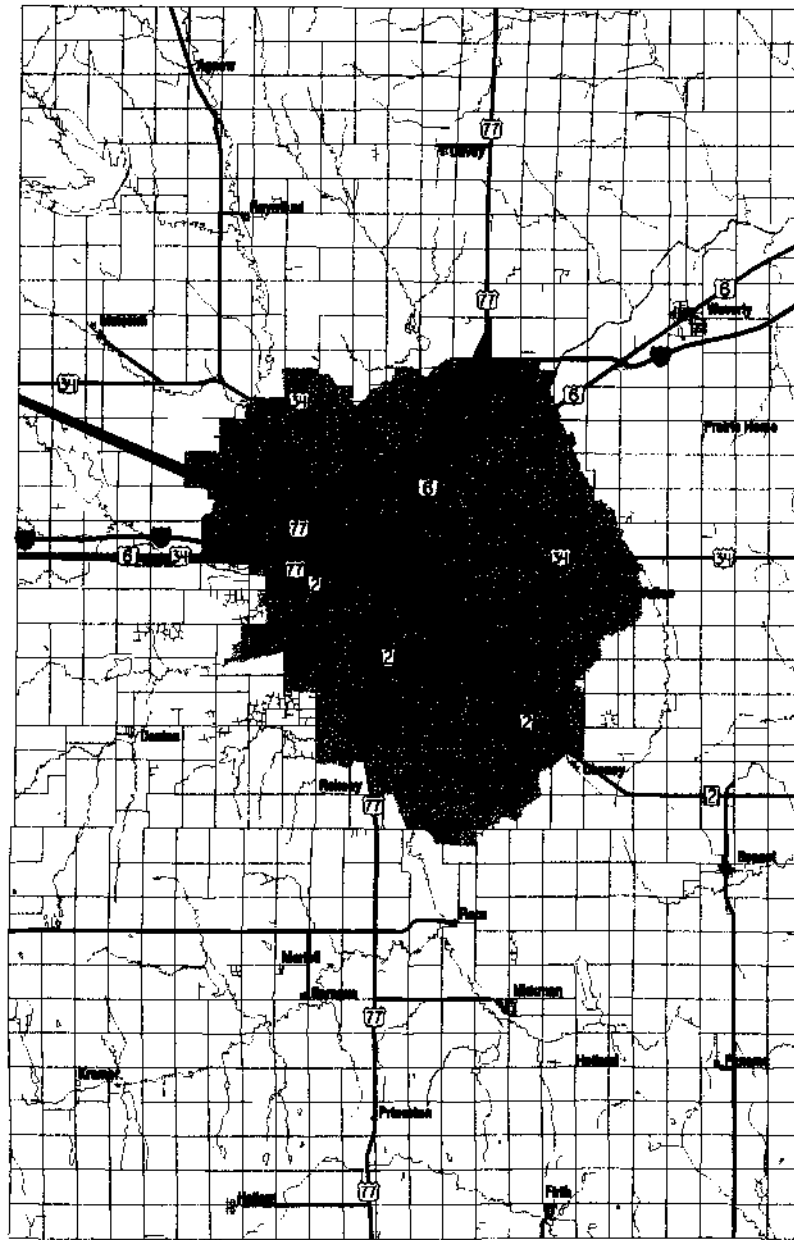


# Capitol View Corridors: City Perspective

Proposed Amendment # 04019

-  Capitol View Corridors
-  Future Service Limit





Little Salt Rd  
 Agnew Rd  
 Rock Creek Rd  
 Devery Rd  
 Branched Oak Rd  
 Raymond Rd  
 Mill Rd  
 Waverly Rd  
 Bluff Rd  
 McKelvie Rd  
 Alva Rd  
 Fletcher Ave  
 Havelock Ave  
 Adams St  
 Holdrege St  
 O St  
 A St  
 Van Dorn St  
 Pioneer Blvd  
 Old Cheney Rd  
 Pine Lake Rd  
 Yankee Hill Rd  
 Redway Rd  
 Saltillo Rd  
 Barrett Rd  
 Watertrunk Rd  
 Rees Rd  
 Merrill Rd  
 Halaman Rd  
 Stagecoach Rd  
 Panama Rd  
 Olive Creek Rd  
 Princeton Rd  
 Polk Rd  
 Firth Rd  
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# Capitol View Corridors: County Perspective

## Proposed Amendment # 19

Capitol View Corridors  
 Future Service Limit

